Policy for garments for 1987 was announced in October, 1986 and is working satisfactorily with increased exports. Any changes, if considered necessary, will be incorporated in the next year's Policy.

Forest cover

474. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Will the MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what was the forest cover in the country at the beginning of 1980;

(b) what was the position at the end of 1986; and

(c) what are the reasons for reduction in the coverage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) According to the National Remote Sensing Agency, the forest cover in the country during the period 1980-82 was 46.34 million hectares.

(b) The position of forest cover in the country at the end of 1986 has not been assessed.

(c) Some of the factors that have led to the deplection/degradation of forest cover are grazing of forest land by the cattle population in excess of the carrying capacity, shifting cultivation, diversion of forest lands for non-forestry purpose, fires and illicit fellings.

Decline in exports of handloom products

475. DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI:
SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of handloom products have dwindled during the past few years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Indian handloom products have not attracted the taste and liking of the foreigners;

(c) whether Government have appointed a Committee to assess the requirements for the modernisation of the handloom industry; and

(d) whether the Committee has submitted its report; if so, what are the important recommendations made by the Committee?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) The exports of cotton handloom fabrics and made-ups have not dwindled in the past few years. The exports of these items during 1986-87 are estimated to be slightly higher than in 1985-86.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No, Sir.

Increase in support price of cotton

476. DR. (SHRIMATI) SAROJINI MAHISHI:
SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY:
DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently Government have increased the support price of cotton by Rs. 10/- per quintal;

(b) whether Government have put restrictions on some States regarding payment on the basis of increased price;

(c) whether Government have directed the Maharashtra Government not to permit the Maharashtra Cotton Federation to make payment